

Howland Wood - Personal

Notes for Articles, Etc.

[n.d.]

my subject for the evening is often in numismatics, especially where ~~they~~ ~~have taken~~ regular coins have been ~~taken~~ and so changed ~~in order~~ to give a vent ~~out~~ for their wrath or hatred that cropped out now and then in the human face. Looking back on these events and especially the resultant manifestations of fire or spite the tangible evidence left behind strikes us as rather petty but nevertheless humorous and ~~petty~~ and funny.

The pieces I wish to call attention to are those mutilated or engraved French coins following the Franco-German war and the surrender of Sedan. Before taking these up, however, I would like to show and mention a few similar occurrences that took place previously in the Roman period original instances of the *Demonstratio memoriae*.

about the first instance of the removal of the name ^{on a coin} ~~of~~
was ^L AELIO SEIANO on a ~~public~~ ^{coin} struck in Spain
in the time of Tiberius. Sejan was a
favorite of Tiberius. Erasures of
names during the time of other
rulers have been noted but the
Damnatio memoriae went itself
to the greatest degree on the emperor
Geta who was murdered in his mother's
arms by his brother Caracalla
in 212 AD. The Emperor ordered
the name of Geta to be erased
from all public monuments

It is not unusual to find erasures of
names on monuments and inscriptions
but on the coins it seems to be confined
largely ~~with~~ ^{to} issues from Asiatic
mints, with the coins of Geta. This was
done on those that showed two heads

The two Spanish coins shown do not come quite exactly under the head of Spite. The history of them is this - The British government had a large number of Spanish coins mostly captured from Spanish ships.

On account of a scarcity of silver coins, these ^{pieces} ~~coins~~ were stamped at the mint ^{in 1797} with ~~with~~ a small punch bearing the head of George III. This stamp was impressed on the cheek or neck of the Spanish Sovereign. These ^{dollars} ~~pieces~~ were paid out at the Bank of England at 4 s. 6 d per dollar. The reason for ~~not~~ ^{not} showing these is because some wag of the time wrote the following couplet.

"The Bank, to make their Spanish Dollars pass,
Stamped the head of a fool on the head of an ass."

Once in a great while one
runs across a coin of Napoleon I
~~for~~ with the head of ^{Napoleon} ~~an owl~~ stamped on
The Emperor's head and his eye gouged
out by a chisel. The best explanation
of this defacement is that it was done by
the Vendéens during the "hundred days".
I have seen four different punches ~~at~~
which goes to show that many pieces
were thus mutilated.

I am also showing a ^{specimen} ~~coin~~ of Maximilian
of Mexico with a crude crown punched
on his neck and on the reverse a raised
liberty cap punched ~~on~~ the crown
over the shield. This specimen is the
only example I have seen and I think
it must be very rare. ^{at any rate}
^{who ever did it} ~~they went~~ to the trouble ^{of making} ~~the~~ ^{two punches}
We now come to those pieces of Napoleon III. To
best understand these we will take up
briefly the events that caused these national
pieces to be engraved.

and especially where Geta bore
the title of Augustus rather
than Caesar. The deformation on
on the coins of Stratonicea in Caria is
the most common, on Pergamum ^{num} ~~mon~~ ^{myth}
instances have been noted on coins
of Nicaea, Perperene, Telazomenae,
Ephesus, Miletus, Smyrna and Isaura.
One of the Stratonicea pieces with the
head of Geta obliterated I am showing.
also a bronze coin of Geta from Nicopolis ad
Vestrum in Thracia ~~bearing~~ showing the ~~face~~ ^{back}
almost hacked to pieces by chisel cuts
From Roman days we will jump to
modern times

The new

The frequent questions in regard to the recent change of types on ~~certain~~ United States gold coins and the evident lack of information about the varieties of experimental pieces render a careful statement of the facts desirable for readers of the Numismatist.

To those who do not have access to a metropolitan daily paper some facts about the origin of the effort and of its real purpose may prove of interest. Of course it is evident to all that primarily the new coins originated in a desire to supplant our old weak and insipid coins with something that might be strong, fresh, and really artistic. For among the modern coinages, ~~the~~ which are almost universally bad, not because they are below standard but because the whole medallic art is today of a low order and expresses a *usually* generally debased taste, among these debased modern coinages our own has ~~generally~~ been assigned a very low position as regards artistic merit. To reach the standard of other nations, while it would be an improvement over our old coins, would yet leave us far short of recognized excellence. What departure from the unfortunate manner of ~~such is the problem~~ what must in these days pass for ~~the~~ medallic art could be made that would restore to coins artistic strength and beauty and still keep them commercially practical?

Such was the problem that the President presented, as it is reported, to the late Mr. Saint-Gaudens and further asked him if it were possible to revive the antique relief on a modern practical coin. Mr. Saint-Gaudens undertook to produce a model that would combine antique artistic and modern mechanical ~~efforts~~. *effects*

The first model ~~presented~~ submitted presented a design in very high relief in a field that was concave and sufficiently deep to permit the border to rise above the relief and thus furnish a surface on which the coins could be stacked.. Dies were produced from these models both of the regular Double Eagle module, for which the designs were intended, and also of the Eagle module. From the ~~score~~ former dies about a score of coins were struck. These pieces are very interesting not only for their rarity and beauty but also because ~~they are~~ the models for them are ~~among the~~ the work of Mr. Saint-Gaudens himself and among ~~his~~ last efforts.

~~The~~ ^{The} dies of the Eagle module represent ~~another~~ effort to ~~store~~ ^{revive} the spirit of the best period of antique coins. These pieces, since they have twenty dollars worth of gold, but are of the diameter of the ten dollar gold piece, are very thick. They would not be considered "practical" now but that does not mean that they are not. It is supposed that there are but two specimens of this variety in existence, but if the ~~New York~~ authorities of the Metropolitan Museum of New York are correct in saying that they had a specimen in the Saint-Gaudens exhibit of last spring, then there are three of them, for the Cabinet of the Mint is officially stated to have two specimens.

In an effort to make the coin commercially ~~practical~~ the relief was made lower and the border of the field flat, ~~from~~ ^{and} dies produced from this second model about 12,000 specimens were struck.

This last variety is well known, having been the subject of so much newspaper comment when it appeared, and also the cause of a great deal of activity in the coin market last Holidays.

Subsequently, ~~or rather~~ in fact before the coins just mentioned had appeared, a third set of models was produced, which conformed to the character of modern coinages and from which the new Double Eagle in low relief was struck, the coin that is familiar to all readers of the Numismatist who cultivate the intimate acquaintance of twenty dollar gold pieces.

There were a few changes of the dies in making the alterations that have been mentioned. Some are unimportant, as the one less ray on the obverse due to restricting the field when the ~~border~~ flat border was added, and the very important change in the size of the Capitol building in the back-ground, which is made considerably larger in the last model.

The new ten had a very similar history. The first design had a sharp edged concave field, which was rejected for the same reason as the first ~~de~~ model of the twenty was rejected. Happily about 550 were struck from the dies produced from that model.

An attempt was made, not by Mr. Saint-Gaudens, to render this design practical by reducing the relief and throwing up a narrow border. ~~Two hundred thousand dollars were~~ Twenty thousand pieces were struck with these dies but subsequently they were ordered into the melting pot, whither they went with the exception of 50 specimens. Two of these are in the mint, several others are in various art galleries and museums, the remainder in private possession.

The models were then altered by Mr. Hering, of Saint-Gaudens's own studio, and with a slightly lower relief and a heavier flat border were accepted. They are the designs of the regular Eagle ~~new series, of the new design~~ in which several million dollars have been struck.

At this present time it is reported from the mint that ~~no coin~~ none of the new gold coin have yet been struck with the motto restored as directed by the Congress. However the dies have been prepared in accordance with that law and at an early date the champions of that motto will have the satisfaction of being assured as often as they get hold of a twenty dollar gold piece that their trust is not in gold.

piece
This die may be easily told from the regular piece put into circulation by the periods at ^{each} end of the different inscriptions.

The ~~causes~~^{reason} of the Franco-Prussian war was
France's jealousy of the growing importance
of Prussia and the desire of Napoleon to bolster
up his throne. The actual cause was the
abdication of Leopold II from the throne of
Spain & the pretensions of Prince Leopold of
Hohenzollern to the vacant throne. Although
this the French objected to, Napoleon withdrew
his candidature. The French ^{still} appeared
to be looking for trouble because the Fr.
Ambassador, unceremoniously demanded of
William I that he declare that no Hohenzollern
prince be permitted to accept the crown of Spain.
Naturally the King broke off the interview ^{the King also}
sent Bismarck a copy of the French demand,
Bismarck gave to the press parts of this demand,
the French in defence of their national honor
declared war on July 19 1870. Both sides were
apparently eager for war, without going into a
detailed account of the ^{complex} ~~war~~, sufficient to say
that the French had overestimated their own
power and had greatly ~~underestimated~~
Germany, in fact they did not realize that South
Germany would join with Prussia. Also the
Germans had nearly twice the number of men
at their command as did the French and much
better equipped, trained & equipped. ~~than~~
~~the French~~. One defeat followed another
and the French forces ~~also~~ became badly scattered

both sides had severe losses, the Germans more than the French, but on the other hand the Germans were victorious and captured many thousands of French soldiers.

On the 18th of August, one month less a day ^{after the start of the war} was fought the battle of Gravelotte where Marshal Bazaine was completely defeated by Prince Frederick Charles, ^{and} was cut off from Paris & driven back on Metz. McDonaugh went to the relief of Metz, but was cut off by two German armies and on Sept 1st fought the battle of Sedan, the Waterloo of the Second Empire. On the second of September the entire army surrendered together with the Emperor Napoleon III 83,000 men including 40 generals 230 staff officers. 2595 officers became prisoners of war in addition to 21,000 men who had been ~~much~~ captured during the battle. ^{sent to} ~~mention~~ ^{3000 sent to Belgium} ^{also 1500 captured} ^{17,000 killed & wounded} When the news reached Paris there was an upheaval on Sept 4 the Third Republic was formed and on the same day the Corps Legislatif declared the Emperor & his descendants forever excluded from the throne.

Shortly after the capture of Sedan on
the 2nd of Sept 1870 some were
too busy far from, clever with the burin
on engraving tool started in to
mutilate the ~~head of Napoleon III~~
on a ten centime piece ^{of Napoleon III} by engraving
a German helmet on his head and putting
a military collar on his neck. many
others probably began doing the same
thing and we find a great variety of
helmets, military hats etc ~~on these pieces~~
they were not seen in Paris until
after the fall of the city. and the
first ones ~~seen~~ ^{noticed} came from Lorraine
and Alsace and quantities of them were
for sale in Strasbourg. It is known that
German soldiers employed here did more
time in doing this work. Of some of the simpler ones
we I have seen ^{I have noticed} a number almost identical
showing that these were made on a wholesale
scale and on these common types very often
the eagle's head on the reverse was stamped out

by a punch showing a ~~horse's head~~
vampire's head or sometimes an
owl's head. Sometimes the word SEDAN
or MEXICO is engraved on the cap. ^{¶ To}
return to the other side - the German helmet
is the most common type and some are
very carefully and elaborately done.
Sometimes the spike ~~of the helmet~~ and
the upper part of the helmet is stamped
in by a punch. The helmet in every
instance is fastened by a strap under
the chin, nearly always a stiff military
collar is ~~engraved~~ but on some sometimes with
the word SEDAN engraved on the collar. On
one piece Napoleon's entire face has been
made over into a caricature. The jaeger
hat with the next popular form, also the
helmet of the Bohemian is found, beside
fatigue and shooting caps, a German ^{or others}
pipe or cigarette was sometimes added, the
hair on the forehead was reengraved to
make a pig and now and then the
whole head was changed. & On one

I am showing looks like an idiot
another is a bearded monk, the
~~was~~ lettering was seldom tampered
with, sometimes a V was added to EMPIRE
to make VEMPIRE for vampire, and
the date of the piece was now and then
changed to 1870. ~~most of the coins~~

The 10 centime piece was the common
one occasionally one meets with a
5 or a 2 centime piece. Silver coins
were seldom engraved a 5 franc and
a 20 centime piece have been
noted. a good ~~many~~ ^{many} of silver coins were
disguised by having the word SEDAN
stamped by a punch over the face of
the emperor. I am showing three
silver specimens one of which is engraved

With their engraving came very tall
might probably, and, but then
from Munich appeared a popular and
attracted or to ^{the} ~~the~~ interest that a
host of pieces soon appeared, inspired
and copied from the engraving come.
Therefore, can do no less than
mention & show these. They were
struck from dies, well cut and well
stamped in bronze brass & copper, resulting
are in ^{the} size of the ten and five cent
pieces. They show the helmeted head of
the emperor and on the larger piece a
fatigued German soldier, and on the small
pieces a stiff iron collar inscribed SECHAN
and ^{with} either a ring or a chain attached. On
the reverse instead of the eagle is an oak
leafed on by a family of ^{or} ~~or~~ cannon. The
inscriptions, which I will give in English, are
as follows. "Napoleon III the Miserable or perhaps
a better ~~perhaps~~ ^{perhaps} ~~perhaps~~ the wicked or wicked
"80 prisoners" referring to the number surrendered at

Sadow, "Perguerer and traitor," Paris
Dec 2 1811 - Sadow Oct 2 1870. These
dates refer to the camp d'Etat, ^{which} ~~which~~ led
to his becoming emperor, and the fall of Sedan.
"Campfire de la prison" instead of
Empire Française. "Napoleon III the little."
A long inscription on paper is a parody
on the letter sent by the emperor to
the King of Prussia when he surrounded
his sword. It is - "Not having the courage
to die at the head of my army, I demand
a hiding place with the King of Prussia." A
another piece showing the back of the
emperor transformed into a pig's head
the inscription. From the grandest of
emperors, whose all that remains.

I will conclude with one of German
manipulation made of leather. It shows the
emperor with a long sword under his
thigh the ends forming donkey ears at the tip,
a close fist threatening him at the front and
a switch behind his head. The inscription
in German reads "Such a donkey's head."

Struck on the day of Wörth, probably
referring to the battle of the same name fought
on August 6. The reverse reads
"Struck from Tannenberg under
Emperor Louis III the Liberator."

Ptolomey, X^{III}, aureles, are of base metal, the latest base metal coin being the drachm of Cleopatra year 6 B.C. & 7. The earliest date of these coins under Tiberius is of the year 7 which begins A.D. 19. The aureus was equal to 25 tetradrachms; the tetradrachm though in weight equal to 4 denarii was in silver contents only equal to 1. But in legal value the Alexandrian drachm was estimated as an obolus thus $\frac{1}{6}$ of a denarius, which makes the tetradrachm equal in legal value to $\frac{2}{3}$. This billon coinage fell in purity, & in the time of Commodus is almost copper, washed with silver. Thus concurrently with the depreciation of the Roman coinage, though more rapidly, the Alexandrian billon decreases in purity & also in volume, until the small tetradrachms of Claudius II. Gothicus contains only .38 of pure

silver & those of Diocletian, in
whose reign the series closes
.18.

The Bronze coinage continues
& is of three denominations, until
a fourth is added, corresponding
to the Roman Sestertius in size
the first example of the largest
size occurs under Vespasian.
Then & subsequently we find 4
denominations, until the reign
of Commodus, when all regular
issue of bronze ceases, as the
business of billon make it
unnecessary, only to be occasionally
resumed, chiefly for chronological
commemorative purposes.

In the Catalogue itself nearly every
coin from the time of Severus Alexander
is described as billon. Those described
as bronze are nearly always over an
inch in diameter.

Hill. Handbook of Greek & Roman coins,
P. 14 Silver of a kind was issued
by some provincial mints under the
emperor - notably Alexandria in
Egypt. - ———, But the metal of
these series rapidly degenerated
into Billon & bronz.

P. 16 Potin, as distinct from billon, which
contains about $\frac{1}{5}$ silver to $\frac{4}{5}$ copper,
is an alloy of copper, zinc, lead
& tin.

P. 90 The character of these coinages (Alexandrian)
is by no means high, & the silver rapidly
becomes billon & the billon bronz.

Cat. of the Coins of Alexandria & the
Nomos in the B. M. by R. S. Pook 1892
Introduction, P. XXVIII, On the Subjugation
of Egypt Augustus seems to have made
no change in the coinage, which was
of bronze only. His first coins are
identical in the reverse types, the
mint letters, & the 2 denominations
with those of Cleopatra VII. Subsequently
Augustus issued one or two lower
denominations.

The long series of billon coins
begins with Tiberius, he resumed
the tetradrachms of the Ptolemies,
the latest of which, those of

Your two coins of Probus Bm cat no. 2412
+ 2417 are classed billon, no bronze
coins are given.

Salonina 2278 + 2280, are classed
billon. 1 coin is given in bronze + is 1.2
in diam.

Dio cletianus 2478 billon + var of 2499 no bronze

Aurelianus aug. + Valentinianus 2392 billon
Numerianus all given are billons, yours
is not in the cat.

Jacitus 2404 Billon no copper

Claudius II 2307 Billon

Carinus Caesar 2448 Billon